

## GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP OF RAILROADS.

In view of Geo. T. Anthony's recent allusions to this subject, the following matter may be of some interest to the readers of the *Advocate*:

(From Chas. F. Adams' "Railroads, Their Origin and Problems.")

Turning now from Great Britain to Belgium, an opportunity is offered to observe the practical working of a wholly different policy. The famous Belgian railroad system originated with King Leopold, and bears to this day marks of the creating mind. When the Manchester & Liverpool railway was completed, the Belgian revolution had not yet taken place, and Leopold was still a resident of England. His attention was naturally drawn to the consequences of the new application of steam, and when a few years later he was called to the throne of Belgium, one of his earliest projects related to the construction of railroads in his new dominions. He was strongly persuaded, however, that the English system of private construction was not the correct one. He, as well as the Duke of Wellington, strongly adhered to the analogy of the highway; but more logical than the duke, his was the king's highway, and not a turnpike. Accordingly he planned a system of railway communication in which the roads—the steam highways—were to be constructed, owned, and operated by the state. With some difficulty legislative assent to his scheme was obtained, and the earliest lines were undertaken in 1833. The government then went on year by year developing the system, but failed to keep pace with the public demand. Accordingly, in a few years, though not until after the principal and more remunerative routes were occupied, concessions, as they were called, being the equivalent of English charters, were made to private companies, which carried on the work of extension.

One peculiar feature in all these concessions had, however, a direct and sagacious, though somewhat distant, bearing on the fundamental idea of the Belgian railroad system—that of ultimate government ownership. They were all made for a term of ninety years, at the expiration of which the railways were to become the property of the state, which was to pay only for their rolling stock. The right was also reserved to the government of buying back the concession at any time, upon assuming payment to the owners for any unexpired balance of the ninety years of a yearly sum equal to the average net receipts during the seven years next preceding the taking. The tendency in Belgium now is for the government to absorb all the remaining lines. Certainly the public feeling points very distinctly towards the acquisition of the remaining lines of the system by the government, while the sale of the government lines to private corporations has never been urged by any considerable party. Financially, the undertaking has proved a decided success, the government roads netting an annual profit of late years of about 6 per cent., which is equivalent to at least 10 per cent in this country.

Prof. Richard T. Ely says, in a recent article in the *Congregationalist*, in regard to the public opinion in Germany on the subject of state ownership of railroads:

The general improvement in railways in Prussia since the nationalization has been immense, and has converted practically the entire people to nationalization—not that there may be no opponents, but that they are few, and rapidly diminishing in number. Every well-informed man whom I met in Prussia, without one exception, considered the test of experience as demonstration of the superiority, in that country, at least, of the government ownership of railways, and I did not see one person who would like to go back to the old system of private ownership.

(From C. Wood Davis.)

The last Victorian report shows this new and sparsely settled country as able to borrow money with which to build national railways at 3½ per cent. per annum. How many American corporations are able to borrow money at such a rate? This saving in the interest charge directly benefits the public, and is due to national ownership, and a like saving will be made by the nationalization of American railways.

This report also shows that while the

country is so rugged that in many cases the gradients are as great as 130 feet per mile, and the cost of labor and supplies more than here, the roads are operated at less cost, as measured by the expense per train mile, than in the favored regions in the United States. The Kansas City, Ft. Scott & Memphis railway is, admittedly, one of the best managed and most economically operated railways in the west, and with the abundance of very cheap coal, low gradients and running more trains than do the Victorian railways, should be operated more cheaply, yet the cost of operating this road, as measured by the cost per train mile—and this is the best possible criterion of economy in operation—is one-third greater than on the government-owned railways of Victoria.

In the United States, one of the useless traffic associations pays its chief umpire nearly as much as Victoria pays its entire commission.

All the Australian reports and accounts, which have come under observation of the writer, are models of conciseness and clearness, and show that there is nothing inherent in railway accounts rendering it necessary that they be made obscure and misleading.

Neither in the Australian report nor in the colonial press is there the least evidence of discriminations against individuals or localities, and this one fact is an argument of greater force in favor of national ownership than all that has ever been advanced against it.

### HIS HEARERS IN THE SAME FIX.

The *State Journal*, in its account of Mr. Cabbison's speech at the court house the other evening, reports him as saying:

He did not know when he began what he would say, or, when he ended, what he had said.

We have conversed with several persons who were present and heard him, and they were very much in the same predicament.

### RECEIVED TOO LATE.

We have a communication from McPherson county relating to the home record of Farmer Smith which came too late for this issue of the *Advocate*. It will appear next week.

Several other communications of less importance also have to go over.

Missouri is not altogether lacking in prosperity, we notice. A Kansas City paper last week contained forty-six columns, nearly seven pages, of tax sale notices set in small type. No wonder the republicans over there are calamity howlers.

If Sam Wood had been murdered in the south as he was in Kansas, it would have been called a political murder. As it is, his murderer is as free as the wind, and is highly respected by the administration crowd in Kansas.

It's sad to think of how free coinage would "unsettle business," as the Kansas bankers resolved the other day, but then no one ever thinks of the unsettled condition of the farmers and other laboring men.

A few more copies of that excellent little book, "The People's Cause," are to be given away with yearly subscriptions received before November 8. Send on a dollar and get both the *Advocate* and the book.

Attention is called to Croby Bros., of this city, who advertise on the last page. No better firm or cheaper house is found in the west. Local readers are urged to patronize them, and those in any section of the state will receive full value on all mail orders.

## KANSAS POLITICS.

### Straws That Show Which Way the Breezes are Blowing.

The democrats of Barton county have endorsed the Populist state ticket.

The report that Duane Freeman had withdrawn from the race in the Sixth district is disputed by Mr. Freeman.

David Overmyer and Judge Doster now speak from the same platform. That makes a rich treat for those who hear them.

Dan Swearingen, editor of the Populist paper at Waverly, has been arrested for publishing obscene literature. He published the truth about his political opponents.

H. S. Martin, the brilliant young lawyer of Marion, spoke to a People's party meeting in the Shawnee court house Saturday night. G. C. Clemens was the principal speaker.

A number of Santa Fe employees who have carelessly let it be known that they were People's party men, have been called up and given to understand that such things would never do.

The franking privilege is stretched alarmingly by the republican state committee. They are using the franking stamp of their congressmen and senators to send out carloads of campaign trash.

The anti-Buchan republican league in Wyandotte county is making it exceedingly hot for the men who championed the Kelly age of consent bill and opposed the anti-Pinkerton and anti-black-list bills.

The report that J. J. Grabel, People's party nominee in the Thirty-ninth senatorial district, has been withdrawn is not true. The committee thinks he is the only man that can defeat the republican candidate there.

Topeka ministers have "memorialized" against the constitutional convention. Considering the stand the average preacher usually takes in political matters, that action is almost enough to carry the vote in favor of the provision.

A. W. Smith is now generally dubbed "Farmer Smith of Copeland county." This originated among the republicans who opposed his nomination and who said that for the last few years Smith had done most of his farming at the Copeland hotel in Topeka.

During his Wichita effort Ft. Scott Harris said the leaders of the People's party were worse than the anarchists who died at the rope's end in Chicago. Then the audience gave three cheers for Jerry, and Harris proceeded to tell how he intended to vote the straight republican ticket. Harris is a "stalwart" democrat.

J. K. Hudson ran up against S. M. Scott at Garden City the other day and during the joint meeting found himself in an extremely uncomfortable position. He was compelled to listen while Scott read some of his (Hudson's) late calamity speeches. The "Majah" endured the agony better than any decent man could have endured it, while the audience cheered Scott and some of the republicans showed their contempt for their would-be champion by leaving.

You don't hear much about Jerry Simpson's cattle sensation since he has produced the evidence of a number of good republicans to prove that bribes were paid to induce the interior department to close its eyes and permit cattle to be grazed on the Cherokee strip in order to swell the Harrison campaign fund. The cattlemen themselves have produced the receipts for the money they paid, and under such circumstances it

was no use for Secretary Noble to deny the charge. For any information about the steal write James Hatson, Sterling, Kas.

The worst joke that has been perpetrated on Jerry Simpson this campaign was played in Chicago at the world's fair dedication. Bill Higgins was induced to wear a pair of glasses in order to give tone to the Kansas crowd. Then somebody circulated the report that the man with the glasses was Jerry Simpson, whereupon everybody but the Kansas crowd began to "Hurrah for Jerry." Bill lifted his hat and gracefully acknowledged the compliment. Then the shouting grew louder and kept on growing till Bill's head swelled to such a size that his hat wouldn't fit.

### Hypocritical Traducers.

To the Editor of THE ADVOCATE.

Mr. Lewelling wants to be governor for what there is in it for himself, and it is well to ask the question as to who and what he is? Kansas wants a man for governor who will unselfishly perform the duties of the office; one who is identified with her growth and development, and not after the salary and perquisites alone.—Eagle.

The man at Topeka, as governor, who would suit the editor of the *Eagle* and the clique that controls him, must needs be some pliant, sycophantic, subservient partisan, so that the *Eagle* could have some "influence" at court. With Lewelling governor, the editor of the *Eagle* knows that straightforward, honest business methods would prevail in the executive office of this state; and, that being so, he could neither presume to suggest, dictate or threaten in reference to any appointments or policy. Whenever the *Eagle* is after anything, you may be sure it is prompted by its vanity or selfishness. This editor's vanity is his vitality; it is all that holds him up. Such devotion to conviction as actuates the editors of the reform press never moves such organs as the *Eagle*.

Now, the fault with these fellows who are opposing Lewelling in Wichita is that they know he is an honest, capable man, and that nothing dishonorable can be charged against him. They know his election will not conserve their selfish schemes, and they hope by insinuations and base innuendoes to so work upon prejudice and impulses as to compass his defeat. Their efforts prove abortive and retroactive. Lewelling is destined to be Kansas' next governor, and as such will fill the office with honor and credit; and in voting for Lewelling no one will make any mistake. GEO. STARK MILLER.

Wichita, Kas., October 20, 1892.

### From Georgia.

To the Editor of THE ADVOCATE.

I see that the *Capital*, published in your state, says that the People's party is dead in Georgia. This, likely, is as near the truth as that paper ever prints. The papers here have not published even the vote of the "bourbon democracy" allowed us in the count. It will never be known just how many votes we did poll, but the democrats have counted about 70,000 up to this time. But for bulldozing and bribery, there is little question but what we would have carried the state by a good majority. It was a fight of the producers against the money and town rings.

Our people are not discouraged, and we send greetings to the brethren of the west, and say, "Meet us in the middle of the road." We are there and there to stay until the victory is won.

In one short campaign we snatched from the party of "rotten egg" argument 75,000 votes. In a short while we will have the large majority and will stand invincible in our determined march in the "middle of the road."

Push the fight in the west and our boys will stand by your side in the struggle.

M. D. IRWIN.  
Atlanta, Ga., October 17, '92.